West Virginia Library Commission
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West Virginia library patrons benefiting from updated software

CHARLESTON, WV.

The patrons of the Northern Library Network, a consortium of West Virginia public libraries, will soon enjoy improved service thanks to a software upgrade coming in September. Patrons of the Mountain Library Network have been benefitting from the same upgrade since June.

The software, Sierra Integrated Library System (ILS), streamlines the work of cataloging books and making them available to patrons, among other tasks. Sierra is an updated and expanded version of Millennium ILS; both are products of Innovative Interfaces, Inc.

Sierra and two new computer servers to host the software were purchased with state funds administered by the West Virginia Library Commission and approved by the Legislature and Governor Tomblin.

Library Commission technical staff recently installed the Northern Library Network's server in the Clarksburg-Harrison Public Library in preparation for the software upgrade. In June, they set up the Mountain Library Network's server in the Raleigh County Public Library in Beckley.

"Libraries are offering more electronic access to materials," said Richard Rekowski, Director of Mary H. Weir Public Library in Weirton and Co-chair of the Northern Library Network. "But libraries still need to offer physical items such as printed books and audio books on CD. With Sierra, we will continue offering interlibrary loan so our patrons can pick books off the shelf of a library in the next county."

According to Rekowski, "The cataloging environment of Sierra is enhanced over the older software. It utilizes Resource Description and Access (RDA), a new cataloging standard. RDA offers more information to patrons and librarians trying to locate a book.

"Sierra has made our work as librarians easier," said Amy Lilly, Director of the Raleigh County Public Library and Chair of the Mountain Library Network. "Staff workflow has been improved with Sierra. We're more efficient now."

Northern Library Network and Mountain Library Network are two of five consortia connecting public libraries and library users in West Virginia; all five consortia are supported by the West Virginia Library Commission.

The networks enhance services to patrons by allowing participating libraries to share their collections with each other; books from a library in the network can be borrowed from any other library in the network.

Information on the Sierra Integrated Library System is available via www.iii.com/products/sierra. The Mountain Library Network provides information about itself at mtlibrary.mln.lib.wv.us. Information on the Northern Library Network is available from nwvlc.clark.lib.wv.us.

The West Virginia Library Commission serves the people of West Virginia and encourages lifelong learning, individual empowerment, civic engagement and an enriched quality of life by enhancing library and information services for all West Virginians. More information is available at www.librarycommission.wv.gov.

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